

# Chapter 5.7

## Asbestos in the workplace

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### ***This could be you . . .***

*A worker may have released asbestos fibers while drilling through some floor tile to install bolts. No one sampled the tile ahead of time, and it was later found that the tile contained asbestos. The worker took no measures to prevent asbestos exposure. The work area had to be decontaminated, which delayed the job.*

*An office employee may have released asbestos fibers when he climbed into a drop ceiling on a ladder to run a cable from a computer to a printer across the room. The area above the ceiling contained asbestos, and entry into the ceiling space was a Class III asbestos activity. The worker wasn't trained in asbestos control techniques, and wasn't using the proper personal protective equipment (respirator and disposable Tyvek clothing) and other items (ground cover, barricades, and warning signs). The asbestos spill response team had to be called out to clean up the area.*

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### **1. Applicability of this chapter**

You are required to follow this chapter if you work at JSC, even if you don't do any asbestos work. If you work at White Sands Test Facility (WSTF), you follow WSTF requirements that meet the intent of this chapter.

### **2. What this chapter covers**

This chapter provides you basic information on asbestos in your work area and on what you need to do to avoid exposing yourself to it. Many JSC buildings contain asbestos. Even if you don't work in one of them, you will visit one occasionally. If you work with asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) or in areas with asbestos, this chapter is only a starting point. You shall follow other requirements such as those found in Part 12 of this Handbook.

### **3. JSC's policy about asbestos**

JSC's policy is to maintain currently existing ACMs in place and to use procedures that will prevent the release of ACM and prevent exposures to workers and building occupants. JSC will remove or abate ACM as necessary to protect the health of all employees. JSC shall follow all federal, state, and local regulations and guidelines that apply to control any hazards with asbestos on JSC property.

## *Asbestos in your work area*

### **4. How to know if your building contains asbestos**

You will see a sign at each entrance to your building informing you that:

- a. The asbestos materials aren't hazardous under ambient conditions.
- b. You shall never disturb ACM without the proper training, notification, and procedures found in Part 12 of this Handbook.

NOTE: You can check the Asbestos Locations Database on the JSC Safety and Total Health Homepage <http://sd.jsc.nasa.gov/omoh/scripts/OccupationalHealth/AsbestosInfo.aspx>

) . You can also ask your facility manager, supervisor, or the Occupational Health Department whether your building contains asbestos.

### **5. What you need to know about asbestos in your building**

If you work in an office and don't disturb building materials, there are a few things you still need to know:

- a. Installed asbestos products aren't hazardous as long as they remain in good condition and you don't disturb them and release fibers.
- b. You shall never do anything to damage building materials or create dust.
- c. Many JSC buildings have spray-applied insulation (SAI) that contains asbestos above suspended ceilings. It is a fluffy beige material. Don't disturb ceiling tiles or go into the ceiling in a building that has SAI unless you have met all the requirements to conduct asbestos activities.
- d. If you find SAI or any beige fluffy insulation that has fallen from the ceiling, it may contain asbestos. Call the Occupational Health Department at (281) 483-6726 to assess the situation and the JSC asbestos spill response team at (281) 483-2038. Never attempt to clean it up yourself.
- e. Many buildings also have ceiling tiles that contain asbestos. Some buildings have attached ceiling tiles to the walls. Never disturb or touch a ceiling tile or a wall in any building unless you know that it doesn't contain asbestos.
- f. If a material is falling from the ceiling and you think or know it is an ACM, notify any coworkers in the immediate area and leave. Then call the Occupational Health Department.
- g. If you are a custodial worker, see paragraph 11 of this chapter for training requirements.

### **6. Prohibited activities**

To reduce the chance for exposure to asbestos, all uncontrolled activities that may damage ACM or cause the release of airborne fibers are prohibited. You shall never:

- a. Cut or drill holes in any ACM.
- b. Install hangers or fasteners in any ACM.
- c. Sand or grind any ACM, including floor tile that contains asbestos.
- d. Damage ACM while moving equipment or furniture.
- e. Install curtains, drapes, or dividers in such a manner that they will damage ACM.
- f. Sweep or use compressed air to clean up ACM. Use only a vacuum equipped with a high-efficiency particulate air filter.
- g. Disturb or remove ceiling tiles without following the procedures in the asbestos control manual.
- h. Damage any pipe or mechanical system insulation that contains or could contain asbestos. Materials such as Styrofoam, foam rubber, foam glass, and fiberglass don't contain asbestos. However, asbestos-containing mud may exist at the joints and fittings. If in doubt, contact the Occupational Health Department (281-483-6726) or the Asbestos Program Manager (APM) before conducting activities that may disturb or damage these materials, or follow the job performance requirement in Part 12 of this Handbook.
- i. Leave waste- or asbestos-labeled disposal bags in mechanical rooms. Call Work Control at 281-483-2038 for disposal bags and asbestos waste pickup. It is your responsibility to ensure any asbestos waste is promptly removed by the Center Operating Support Services contractor.

### *Requirements for working with ACM or in asbestos areas*

#### **7. If you are planning any operations, maintenance, or construction**

See Part 12 of this Handbook if you are planning any work that could disturb ACM..

#### **8. If your work could expose you to asbestos**

Follow Part 12 of this Handbook for any work involving ACM.

#### **9. If you will control or manage ACM**

If you supervise personnel or oversee contracts engaged in activities that involve controlling or managing ACM, you shall ensure that those whom you oversee follow the requirements detailed in Part 12 of this Handbook. Call the APM or the Occupational Health Officer if you have questions about these requirements. This includes developing work plans and specifications for the job.

## 10. If you fail to follow asbestos requirements

Any failure to adhere to this chapter or the procedures in Part 12 of this Handbook will be reported to the supervisor in charge or a contract official and to the APM. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

## 11. Training to work with ACM or in asbestos areas

Before you are assigned to do any work that could disturb asbestos, a “competent person,” as defined by OSHA and Part 12 of this Handbook, shall certify that you have met all requirements. The following table tells you what training you need to have for your particular job.

<i><b>If you . . .</b></i>	<i><b>Then you shall have training in . . .</b></i>
Work in a building that contains asbestos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The fact that your building has asbestos</li><li>• How to recognize ACMs</li><li>• What to do if you suspect an asbestos release in your work area</li></ul>
Are a custodial worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identifying asbestos in the JSC workplace</li><li>• What to do and who to call if you suspect that you have found asbestos debris</li><li>• Proper methods for housekeeping in areas with asbestos</li><li>• Caring for floor materials that contain asbestos</li><li>• The procedures detailed in Part 12 of this Handbook</li></ul>
Do any work that could disturb asbestos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The specific class of asbestos work you will be doing as detailed in Part 12 of this Handbook</li><li>• How to use a respirator, which includes a fit test and medical surveillance</li></ul>
Are a “competent person” as defined by OSHA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The subjects required by OSHA to be a “competent person”</li><li>• The procedures detailed in Part 12 of this Handbook</li></ul>